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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1973

What value for education costs?

Premier William Davis says his government still gives education spending high priority. Since he said it when opening the \$29 million campus of Erindale College in Mississauga, of which his government put up all but \$1 million, it's hard to challenge his sincerity.

But the public is not as delighted as it used to be at seeing vast amounts of tax money poured into education, and is questioning whether the results represent good value for the dollars spent. This is the feeling that supports the Queen's Park spending ceilings which are being fought by the teachers in their boycott of extracurricular activities.

In the past quarter-century, education has undoubtedly been Canada's major growth industry. Between 1947 and the fiscal year 1971-72, public spending on education was multiplied by 26, from \$277 million to \$7.46 billion.

The chief motive behind this splurge was economic. It was believed that education would repay many times over whatever public money was invested in it, in the forms of rising national wealth and high incomes for the educated.

As an economic investment, education is proving somewhat disappointing. Countries that devote a much smaller portion of their gross national product to education than Canada does—notably Japan and West Germany—are advancing faster economically. Many well-educated, or at least long-schooled, Canadians can't find jobs to match their credentials. The only sure result of spending huge sums on

education is that you get a huge educational establishment which costs huge sums to keep going.

There were critics who said all along (and they are getting a better hearing now) that economic enrichment, national or individual, was a false goal for education. They said the object of education was qualitative, not quantitative: To enrich the individual's life through knowledge and intellectual power, through his understanding of his society and cultural heritage.

Well then, how much quality are we buying? Not much, if you believe the complaints of high school teachers that many students promoted to that level still haven't mastered the elementary three Rs, and the complaints of college professors that each successive class of high school graduates is more ignorant and ill-prepared for college-level work than the last. What quality can be expected from a high school system that has no compulsory subjects—not math, not English, not history, not French—and that will confer a high school diploma on a student who has taken all his course credits at the Grade 9 level?

The premier's assurance of priority for educational spending would be better received if accompanied by a commitment to getting value for the money—in intellectual and cultural if not economic terms. Plus some believably rigorous ideas about how the education department proposes to go about getting that value.

A breach of faith with Eaton Centre

Municipal governments, no less than corporations or neighbors, cannot afford to have their relations undermined by bad faith.

If people doing business with a municipality lose confidence in the way the city conducts its affairs, they will simply take their business elsewhere.

This is what Toronto City Council is risking in its effort to squeeze further concessions out of the developers of Eaton Centre, who had reason to believe they already had a solid agreement with the city.

From May, 1970, when the Eaton developers, Fairview Corporation, first introduced their plan to rebuild the block between Yonge, Bay, Queen and Dundas Sts., until November, 1972, when a development agreement with the city was signed, Eaton Centre was extensively examined, reviewed and bargained over.

Using leverage provided because Fairview required some city streets to be closed, council forced the developers to upgrade their project substantially with more open space, a better Yonge St. facade and more convenient pedestrian access. Holy Trinity Church—which holds land in the centre of the project—was an able bargainer in the public interest as well.

When the reviews were complete, public meetings held, guidelines established, city planners satisfied, council approval won and agreement signed, Fairview had a right to believe it could go ahead with the expensive business of preparing detailed plans so that building permits could be applied for.

Even when a majority of council approved a

holding bylaw, designed to give the city more control over downtown development, the first two east side phases of the Eaton project were specifically exempted.

Certainly, there was no doubt of the desirability of this on the part of the Toronto Buildings and Development Committee which said in its report to council Sept. 26 that "it would appear that Phases 1A and 1B lands of the Fairview project should be exempted. . . . The action of the municipality in passing a bylaw which could prevent such (a project) from proceeding might constitute bad faith on the municipality's part."

But then, under the leadership of Alderman Karl Jaffary, council decided, bad faith or not, it was going to squeeze Fairview harder and apply a height limit to the first phases of Eaton Centre after all.

Council obviously does not plan to restrict the project to a height limit of four storeys—as the holding bylaw nominally calls for—but it apparently does wish to reopen the whole question of building scale and position on the Fairview lands.

What possible justification is there for such harassment of a responsible development short of simple-minded ideological confrontation which many thought Jaffary had put behind him?

At tomorrow's meeting, council should reconsider its decision to break the agreement with Eaton Centre. Developers, like civic unions or citizen taxpayers, are entitled to believe that, when bound by a signed agreement, even politicians can be trusted to stick by their word.



'Canada could set the pattern for international peacekeeping'

By ROBERT CAMERON

When President Nasser kicked Canadians unceremoniously out of Egypt in 1956, he gave us a message and Viet Nam earlier this year made it abundantly clear: Peacekeeping commitments needn't last forever.

All along, Canada's biggest beef about this type of military undertaking has been that, once committed, there seems to be no end to a specific job; they turn into never-ending missions.

No one, of course, likes to start something that can't be finished. This ingrained aspect of the work ethic has probably blinded us to the possibility and merit of setting firm limits to a peace-keeping operation.

In the case of Viet Nam, Canada was perhaps overly tough with prior requirements for her participation. Quite properly we compromised to get the job started. However, when the effort bogged down into senseless, repetitive bickering, and we found ourselves supervising a war, the government did exactly the right thing in cutting bait.

Limit the period

Having established the precedent of opting out when peacekeeping clearly becomes a nonsense, Canada should now consider this additional initiative: She should limit her period of participation on all such operations, even though they may be producing reasonable results.

If Canada insisted on such a ground rule, critics would use the arguments about a break in continuity, and loss of experience on a specific job, to oppose her. In general, people should naturally do better work as they gain knowledge of local conditions.

But with the best of intentions in this business, they can also get into a rut. And wittingly or unwittingly they can easily create animosities.

So, from a technical point of view, new faces and perhaps new wrinkles to the job, at predetermined intervals, could be just the sort of innovation United Nations peacekeeping desperately needs to restore its credibility.

A good place to try this rotational routine would be Cyprus. At this point, it must be obvious to any observer that the UN force is a popular commodity on the island. Indeed, by providing a considerable boost to the local economy, Canadians, along with other peacekeepers, are probably now doing more to support the luxury of continued animosity between Greeks and Turks than they are to end it.

Talks with Makarios

This fact must have been clearly in Defence Minister James Richardson's mind when he spoke recently with President Makarios. He suggested it was high time "for Cypriot officials to generate a political de-confrontation which would hopefully create more good will and confidence between the hostile racial elements." By some accounts the president seems to have taken Richardson's word to heart.

Nevertheless, a firm decision by Canada to relinquish her responsibility after a final six months extension this December could be a practical reminder that 10 years is probably enough of any good thing—even peacekeeping.

Another initiative for Canada, based on experience in Cyprus, would be to overhaul the system of providing her personnel for peacekeeping.

Up to now we've done the job almost entire-

Opinion



★ Robert Cameron is a former air vice-marshal with the Canadian Forces.

ly with regular force personnel. For a certain period, any job provides them good administrative experience and tactical training. But in Cyprus we have long since been on the back side of the learning curve.

To avoid this sort of thing, we should make more extensive use of our excellent militia. Canadian businessmen I've spoken to about this see no problem in releasing personnel for a reasonable tour of duty. Some of our peripatetic and idealistic college students might also be injected into the act, via the summer employment program.

Many regulars will tell you that it would be disastrous to use anything but highly trained professionals on such sensitive work. Nevertheless other nations use militia on peace teams without noticeable harm.

If, in the course of one or two hours a week during the winter months, non-professionals can't be trained to carry out at least 80 per cent of such work, then surely there's something wrong with the Defence Department—not the principle, the militia, or Canadian youth.

Canada is in a strong position to set the pattern of time-limited, peacekeeping by any one nation. By pressing for this innovation, there's a good chance that the whole concept of international co-operation on this work could be stripped of many illusions and buttressed by more realistic planning.



JAMES RICHARDSON
"More goodwill and confidence"

HIGH-RISES NOT NECESSARY

'We can make the city's core attractive and liveable'

By DOUGLAS FULLERTON

Canadians have been too influenced by the American urban experience.

The core of many American cities has become a scene of crime and racial violence, following frequently upon destruction of neighborhood patterns by road widening and expressway building. Our Canadian cities have been less affected by the car, do not have the same racial and poverty problems, and come from a much less violent tradition.

Yet most Canadian planners, perhaps because of their predominant American training, seem to approach our city problems as if they are the same as in the U.S.

There are common problems, but the centres of most Canadian cities, as in most European cities, are quite liveable.

What is more to the point, with a little imagination and money they can be made very attractive indeed—and can house a great many more people than they do now.

Many Canadians in the suburbs are tired of the homogeneity of their neighborhoods, and of their transportation problems and dependence on cars, and would choose a lively and liveable centre town if decent accommodation were available. The attractiveness of downtown Ottawa, for example, has been greatly enhanced by the National Arts Centre, the Sparks St. pedestrian mall, and such amenities as bicycle paths and walkways, and the use of the Rideau Canal for skating and boating.

In Canada the revival of centre town as a preferred living area is really not that difficult; the main problem is the value of downtown land tends to be so high that housing must be fairly dense to justify its use.

High-rise 'vogue'

Here we have not been very successful in meeting the challenge. Our architects seem to have become slaves of the high-rise vogue, which has been carried to such extremes in the U.S. and copied around the world. High-rise living, most people agree, is not very good for raising families—however attractive it may be for the unmarried and the childless couples.

Further high-rise apartments are not the only way to build more densely, and frequently isn't the best way. One of the charms of older European cities is the array of traditional three- and four-storey row flats and apartments which line most downtown streets. Modernization has brought much of this row housing up to and frequently surpassing new housing standards.

And there are many new developments which follow along the low-rise pattern. I have seen several in the centre of London, built around a central park and play area, and occupied by a healthy mix of young and old, of single persons and couples and families with children. Maximum height is the walk-up levels of three to four storeys and the density matches that of high-rise.

Unfortunately we Canadians still appear to hold to the quaint idea that old row housing is something to be knocked down and replaced by high-rise, rather than to be fixed up. Vancouver, Winnipeg, and particularly Montreal have been damaged by this. Equally unfortunately, the replacement for the buildings knocked down is often a parking lot—for commuters.

Saving old houses is difficult, given the problem of fragmented ownership and the inability to compel recalcitrant or absentee owners to co-operate in an overall plan.

Bylaws and zoning

However, if the city prevents the destruction of such housing through bylaws and zoning, and if it subsidizes—rather than raises the taxes—on house improvements in designated areas, the incentives will work for rather than against remodelling.

Other incentives could involve the closing of certain streets to cut off noisy traffic, and the improvement of old downtown schools. By-laws can be changed to permit "infilling," that is the use of existing spaces between houses, for building.

One ingenious new proposal is "Overstreet," in which Harry Mayerovitch, a Montreal architect, proposes building new housing above the streets, permitting greater housing density in the same area with more open space. And Washington D.C. is seeking free land for public housing over urban expressways.

★ Douglas Fullerton is former chairman of the National Capital Commission.

Don't cut back on Pickering plans

The government of Ontario had excellent reasons for deciding to build a new town in North Pickering at least two years before Ottawa announced that an airport would be built in the same area.

As Ontario's Design for Development explained in 1970, the important implication of the plan was to "focus growth in specific locations in the east and in the process attempt to reduce the growth pressures to the west of Metro."

In a sense, the airport is a bonus, providing jobs that might otherwise have to have come from inducing industry to locate there. But the establishment of a 15,000-acre townsite carried its own defensible rationale.

So why is Queen's Park now talking about "a much smaller acreage" than originally planned?

Has the overwhelming tug to the west of the city lessened at all? Certainly not. Mississauga is talking about a population of one million people.

Has Queen's Park decided the theory of new towns is wrong? There is no reason to think so. Reports continue to pour out of government offices explaining why it is necessary to offset the attractions of the big city.

A fair deal for the dispossessed

When a family's home is taken away in the larger interest of the community, there is a public responsibility to ensure they suffer a minimum of financial damage and personal hardship.

The test of a fair and equitable expropriation formula is simple: Will the price offered—and the assistance made available—enable the homeowners to move to other suitable accommodation without financial loss?

The principle of fair compensation and financial aid is pretty well established in urban renewal projects. Metro Planning Commissioner Wojciech Wronski wants it extended to include suburban residents forced out of their homes by the Scarborough Expressway. And rightly so.

It should be an established cost of expressway construction that relocation of families be a charge on the community in general. Simply paying the market price for their homes is not enough. There are too many other costs—moving, new mortgage arrangements, possible hotel bills and replacement of certain fixtures such as curtains and carpeting.

In fact, it can be argued that not only should the people be appropriately assisted whose houses are destroyed but those whose quiet enjoyment of their homes and gardens is interrupted by expressway noise should be compensated as well.

So rather than downgrading the importance of Pickering's new town, the province should be re-emphasizing it. Ottawa's delay—for political reasons—in making its final airport decision is no excuse for Queen's Park reducing the needed acreage. Neither is an increase in price. What did the government expect? That land prices were going to go down?

The Metro Toronto region must have communities to the east and it must have the infrastructure to support them—the Scarborough Expressway, GO transit, elevated commuter lines.

The alternative is overcrowding and massive increases in housing cost within Metro or lopsided development to the west of the city.

Provincial Treasurer John White ought to reassure the Legislature that as the former treasurer Darcy McKeough told the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in June, 1972: "The government believes that North Pickering will provide an ideal opportunity to demonstrate that large modern urban communities can continue to be pleasant places in which to live."

There are many hundreds of thousands of potential settlers in this region who would be happy to have an opportunity to find that out.

Why should a private citizen have to accept a lower price for his house because public policy dictated that its location has now made it a less desirable property?

There are some 502 residential properties to be demolished for the expressway. It will be a test of Metro's commitment to human as well as community values to see that these people are treated as individuals and not simply as bookkeeping entries.

Twinkle, twinkle . . .

Lovers of tradition will be greatly disturbed by the news that a comet, described by astronomers as the most spectacular in more than a century, will appear in the heavens around Christmas. The head is said to be 60 million miles long, while the tail will extend over one-sixth of the visible sky.

Our ancestors believed that comets were heralds of disaster. If there is anything in this theory, a visitor of this size could mean really king-size bad news.

We can only hope that the comet was intended to announce the great events of 1973—Watergate, the Middle East war and the rise in prices—and somehow got delayed in transit.